

spent on wildfire. The Forest Service has said that it now spends nearly half of its discretionary budget on wildfire. Some of our colleagues and this administration have conflated the fire borrowing problem with this budgeting issue. They have sought to shift anticipated wildfire suppression costs off-budget to limit how much of the Forest Service's discretionary budget is spent on fire with the goal of "freeing up" dollars for other programs under the discretionary cap.

Cap adjustments and budgeting generally are within your committee's jurisdiction. I say to Senator ENZI. Have I properly characterized the wildfire budgeting issues we are wrestling with?

Mr. ENZI. I agree with Senator MURKOWSKI that fire borrowing has been mischaracterized and conflated with the Forest Service's overall concern about its discretionary budget. Although I recognize the fact that the Forest Service has serious management challenges, consensus doesn't exist in the Senate to adjust the caps so the Forest Service can spend more money on other programs within its discretionary budget.

That said, Congress must find a fiscally responsible solution to wildfire funding and fire borrowing. I welcome the opportunity to review the fire borrowing issue in my committee and how the unpredictable costs of wildfire suppression have forced Congress to appropriate emergency dollars in past years. We can find a solution to budgeting for wildfires. We cannot, however, only work on the budget issues without also making changes to the way we manage our forests. It is crucial to ensure taxpayer dollars are being used efficiently and effectively.

Just as there are many State, local, and Federal partners in the field when it comes to suppressing wildfires during the fire season, it is important that all the necessary committees in the Senate work together on this issue. I look forward to addressing these issues with Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator ROBERTS, with my committee members, and with other Western Senators interested in the outcome.

Mr. ROBERTS. Thank you to my colleagues, Senator ENZI and Senator MURKOWSKI, for their work on these important issues related to wildfire and forest management. I would like to echo their concerns and share with the rest of my colleagues that I agree with them entirely that this is a critical issue that needs to be addressed. Coming off the end of a catastrophic wildfire season with a record amount of acres burned, it is essential that the Senate turn its attention to finding a wildfire solution in 2016—and through regular order.

As chairman of the Agriculture Committee, it is my first and foremost priority that the committee serve as the platform for America's farmers, ranchers, small businesses, rural communities—and forest land owners and forestry stakeholders, a constituency

sometimes forgotten. As chairman of the Agriculture Committee, we intend to serve and represent all of agriculture, of which forestry plays an important role.

Last November, the Agriculture Committee held a hearing on the effects of wildfire and heard testimony from stakeholders on the budgetary impacts and threats to natural resources on Federal, State, and private forest lands. The message from that hearing was unanimous and clear: it is time for Congress to act and advocate for solutions that not only address funding fixes, but more importantly advocate for solutions that improve the management of our national forests.

H.R. 2647, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015, which passed the House last summer, has been referred to the Senate Agriculture Committee. This legislation, while not perfect, includes provisions that attempt to address both the funding mechanism and incorporate meaningful forest management tools which are the paramount issues in the overall wildfire debate. I recognize the challenges that remain ahead with crafting such a legislative proposal that satisfies all interested parties involved in this larger debate. With that being said, I stand ready to work with my colleagues to find areas where common ground and consensus can be achieved to address the overall wildfire issues facing us today.

I look forward to working together with Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator ENZI, and others to provide the necessary tools to expedite the much needed work on not just Western forests, but also nationwide, encompassing Federal, State, and private forest lands.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank Senator ROBERTS. I look forward to working with him as well. And he is right. The wildfire problem is not just a budgeting problem—it is also a management problem. Reforming the way we manage our forests is absolutely crucial. Healthy, resilient forests are fire-resistant forests; yet despite knowing the value of fuel reduction treatments in mitigating wildfire risks, increasing firefighter safety, and protecting and restoring the health of our forests, active management is still often met with a series of discouraging and near insurmountable obstacles.

High upfront costs, long planning horizons, and regulatory requirements—including what seem like unending environmental reviews—are impeding our ability to implement treatments at the pace and scale these wildfires are occurring. We must also work with our State agencies, local communities, and the public to increase community preparedness and install fuel breaks to break up fuel connectivity to keep fires small.

As you can see here, the chairmen of the committees with jurisdiction over the wildfire budgeting and forest management issues are ready to roll up our

sleeves in 2016. We are going to work through regular order, in a transparent and collaborative manner, to come up with a legislative solution.

We look forward to the input of our colleagues, who also care deeply about these issues. My plan is to dedicate whatever time we have in February after this bill clears the floor—and the entire month of March—to producing this legislative product. I appreciate Members' willingness to work with us and believe we are on a good track to find real solutions to our wildfire challenges.

IMPROVING THE FEDERAL RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my remarks to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

IMPROVING THE FEDERAL RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

Before we begin today's hearing, I want to briefly mention for the information of committee members one of the next items on the committee's agenda, and that's biomedical innovation. I was glad to announce yesterday our committee's plans to hold its first markup on Feb. 9 to consider the first set of bipartisan bills aimed at spurring biomedical innovation for American patients. Senators and staff on our committee have been working throughout 2015 to produce a number of bipartisan pieces of legislation that are ready for the full committee to consider.

The House has completed its work with its 21st Century Cures Act. The president announced his support for a precision medicine initiative and a cancer "moonshot." It is urgent that the Senate finish its work and turn into law these ideas that will help virtually every American.

The committee has also been working for months on legislation to help achieve interoperability of electronic health records for doctors, hospitals and their patients—and the committee will be releasing a bipartisan staff draft of that legislation later today for public comment.

This February markup will be the first of three committee meetings that we have planned to debate and amend bills as the committee moves forward on the bipartisan goal of modernizing the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health to get safe, cutting-edge drugs and devices to patients more quickly.

Last week, in his State of the Union address, the president reiterated his support for a Precision Medicine Initiative and announced the administration's cancer "moonshot" initiative—and I look forward to working with the president and Vice President Biden.

In addition, this year the committee intends to be busy on oversight of the Every Student Succeeds Act. A law that's not implemented appropriately is not worth the paper it's printed on, and we will plan a series of hearings this year to make sure that it's implemented the way Congress wrote it and the president signed it.

And, of course, we've done a great deal of work on reauthorizing the Higher Education

Act, which expired at the end of last year. We have a number of bipartisan proposals that will make it easier and simpler for students to attend college and for administrators to operate our 6,000 colleges and universities.

But, another priority of the committee is legislation dealing with the mental health crisis in America, which we are discussing today.

The committee has done a great deal of work on this subject. On September 30, 2015, this committee passed S. 1893, Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act of 2015, introduced by Senator Murray and myself. This bill, cosponsored by many members of the committee, reauthorizes and improves programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services related to awareness, prevention, and early identification of mental health conditions. The Senate passed this important piece of legislation on December 18, 2015. Senators Cassidy and Murphy have introduced legislation, and Sen. Murray and I have been working with them. We hope to move promptly to bring recommendations before the full committee.

Not everything the Senate may want to do is within the jurisdiction of this committee. We're working with Sen. Blunt, who is the chairman of the Senate's health appropriations subcommittee, on ideas that he's proposed—as well as with Sen. Cornyn on issues that the Judiciary Committee is considering and the Senate Finance Committee, which will also be involved.

Here is why there is such interest in the United States Senate in the mental health crisis in America today: A 2014 national survey from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration found that about one in five adults had a mental health condition in the past year, and 9.8 million adults had serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or depression that interferes with a major life activity.

However, nearly 60 percent of adults with mental illness did not receive mental health services in 2014. Only about half of adolescents with a mental health condition received treatment for their mental health condition.

Mental health conditions that remain untreated can lead to dropping out of school, substance abuse, incarceration, unemployment, homelessness, and suicide. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, and 90 percent of those who die by suicide have an underlying mental illness.

I hear from many Tennesseans about the challenges faced by individuals and families living with mental illness. From 2010 to 2012, nearly 21 percent of adults in Tennessee reported having a mental illness—that's more than a million people—according to the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. About 4 percent had a serious mental illness—that's nearly a quarter of a million Tennesseans.

According to a 2015 report from the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, the most recent data available shows Tennessee's rate of suicide reached its highest level in 5 years in 2013. Also in 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that suicide was the second leading cause of death for Tennesseans between the ages of 15 and 34. Scott Ridgway, head of the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, last year stated that suicide "remains a major public health threat in the state of Tennessee."

At our October hearing on mental health, this committee heard from administration witnesses about what the federal government is already doing to address mental illness. Today, I look forward to hearing from the doctors, nurses, advocates and administra-

tors who work every day with Americans who struggle with a mental health condition about how the federal government can help patients, health care providers, communities, and states to better address mental health issues.

One way is to ensure that the latest and most innovative research findings get translated into practice and can change the lives of individuals and families across the United States. For example, at our earlier hearing, the National Institute of Mental Health's then-director, Dr. Tom Insel, discussed the Recovery After an Initial Schizophrenia Episode, or RAISE study. The study found that identifying and treating psychosis early with a comprehensive, personalized treatment plan can significantly improve an individual's quality of life. Many states have begun implementing treatment programs based on this model—and it was called a "game changer" by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

I am interested to hear from our witnesses how the federal government can support state efforts to implement innovative and evidence-based treatment programs—as well as their thoughts to help ensure that Washington is not getting in the way.

Strengthening our mental health care system will require modernizing the leading agency for mental health. It will also require involvement from patients, families, communities, health care providers, health departments, law enforcement, state partners, and others.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses here today about the challenges we face and the solutions they believe are needed to address them head on.

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF WELD, MAINE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Town of Weld, ME. Known today as a gateway to the rugged and beautiful Western Maine Mountains, Weld was built with a spirit of determination and resiliency that still guides the community today.

Weld's incorporation on February 8, 1816, was but one milestone on a long journey of progress. For thousands of years, Maine's Western Mountains were the hunting grounds of the Abenaki Tribe. The reverence the Abenaki had for the natural beauty and resources of the region is upheld by the people of Weld today.

The early settlers at what was called Webb's Pond Plantation were drawn by fertile soil, vast forests, and fast-moving waters, which they turned into productive farms and busy mills. The wealth produced by the land and by hard work and determination was invested in schools and churches to create a true community.

Weld is a town of patriots. Its namesake, Benjamin Weld, was a hero of the American Revolution. Ninety-three townsmen answered freedom's call during the Civil War; more than 20 gave their lives preserving our great Nation. The veterans memorials at the town library stand in silent tribute to those who have defended America throughout our history.

Weld also is a town of involved citizens. The active historical society, vol-

unteer fire department, and library are evidence of a strong community spirit. The planning and volunteerism that have gone into this yearlong bicentennial celebration are evidence that Weld's spirit grows only stronger.

This 200th anniversary is not just about something that is measured in calendar years; it is about human accomplishment and an occasion to celebrate the people who for more than two centuries have worked together and cared for one another. Thanks to those who came before, Weld has a wonderful history. Thanks to those who are there today, it has a bright future.

TRIBUTE TO DR. ALEXIS RUDD

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Dr. Alexis Rudd, a Knauss Sea Grant Fellow on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and other members of the committee over the past year.

Dr. Rudd received her Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Hawaii. In her postgraduate work, she has used her scientific expertise to inform public policy.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr. Rudd for all of the fine work she has done. I wish her continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD D. SPIEGELMAN

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Richard D. Spiegelman. In a world of shifting alliances and temporary commitments, you occasionally come to know someone who epitomizes constancy, loyalty and devotion to the public good. And if you are very lucky, you get to work with him or her. I have had the good fortune of working with such a person, my former legislative director and counsel, Dick Spiegelman. For 8 years, Dick brought to my Senate office a piercing intellect, an intense work ethic, an unfailing good nature, and a vast collection of colorful bowties.

I first came to know Dick when he worked for my father, Governor Casey, as Pennsylvania's general counsel, the highest ranking attorney in a Governor's administration. He had sterling academic credentials: an undergraduate degree from Williams College, as well as a master's degree and a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania. More importantly, he brought a wealth of experience in both the private and public sectors to the job. Following 8 years of service in Governor Casey's administration, Dick returned to private practice as a partner in the Dilworth Paxson law firm, representing a blue-chip clientele of major telecommunications companies. After I was elected Pennsylvania auditor general in 1996, my transition leaders broached the idea of luring Dick back